

CHAP. II.

The manner in which the author was taught writing, the first rules in arithmetic, &c.

I Was still only in the fifth year of my age, when my father determined to set me to writing. For this purpose he bought a copy-book at my publisher's. This was filled with the alphabet of the great and small letters, and printed in red ink. My father's first business with me was to make me hold my pen properly, and this indeed was the most difficult task he had with me; but I conquered it at last, to his entire satisfaction, and my great pleasure.

With a pen dipped in black ink, I was directed to cover first the short, and then the long strokes, in order to give me a notion of the proper slopes of letters; from leaving this, I proceeded to make entire letters, then to join letters together, and form figures. The end of the book furnished me with examples of letters united into long words, and lastly the great or capital

ital letters. By these means alone, with very little further instruction from my father, I was enabled to write as good a hand as the generality of tradesmen do, and this without going to school; while others spend many pounds, and lose much valuable time in going through the rules of designing and self-interested teachers, without making, even at last, any considerable progress in this art. The utility of this writing-book, as well as of the squares before-mentioned, must be obvious to every one that inspects them.

As my ambition led me to aim at the highest perfection in this art, the beginning of my sixth year was employed in copying the productions of the best penmen; and I had the satisfaction of receiving the highest encomiums, from every one to whom my writings were shewn.

My father, encouraged by the quick progress I had lately made in reading and writing, proceeded to teach me arithmetic.

I have already observed, that I had learnt how to write figures; and my father now proceeded to teach me in what manner to

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